



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

August 30, 2020

The Salvation He Offers

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Once Peter is called “the rock” for his faith, he turns and dissuades Jesus from the cross. Jesus responds sternly: “Get behind me, Satan!”

Jesus reveals two important things here. First, that Satan exists. Satan is very interested in going unnoticed, yet Jesus calls him out and makes Peter (and us) aware. The Bible is full of references to the devil. Popular culture also has focused on evil spirits—fascinated as it is with the occult, vampires, and the like. It seems to bear evil out more (and profit more from it) than some Catholics in the pews!

The second truth is that Satan

can influence our thinking. I’m not referring to diabolical possession, which is a reality, but the more common temptations to lower our aspirations and to conform our thinking to a faithless perspective.

The painting *Satan Before the Lord* by Corrado Giaquinto, which depicts Satan asking and receiving permission to tempt Job, focuses on this reality of evil. Satan knows our hearts and finds just the right strategy to lead us away from God. It usually involves one of the vices (lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, or pride). Just like when Satan tempts Peter, he wants us to reject the demands of the cross, for he knows the cross is the instrument of his demise.

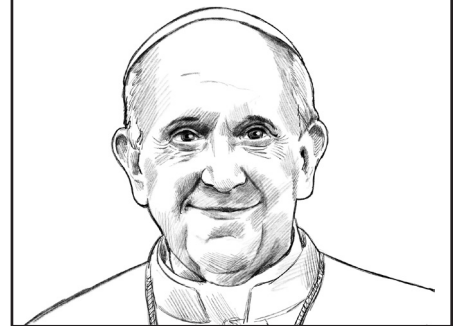
When God permits temptations to assail us or the effects of evil to touch our lives, we should respond humbly, as Job and Peter did. If God permits evil, it is only because he trusts us to love him sincerely—not just for the blessings he sends, but because of the salvation he offers. +

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A Word from Pope Francis

Homes for the elderly... should be the “sanctuaries” of humanity where one who is old and weak is cared for and protected....It is so good to go visit an elderly person! Look at our children: sometimes we see them listless and sad; they go visit an elderly person and become joyful!

Meeting with the elderly,
September 28, 2014



Sunday Readings

Jeremiah 20:7–9

All day long I am an object of laughter; / everyone mocks me.

Romans 12:1–2

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God.

Matthew 16:21–27

[Jesus said,] “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How are you tempted by the enemy of your soul?
- Are you ever convinced you aren’t being tempted at all?

Service: Our Path to Joy

By Bishop Robert F. Morneau

Jesus taught by word and deed. In his Sermon on the Mount he delivers words that point to the path of happiness. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the peacemakers, those who hunger and thirst for justice, the merciful. The Beatitudes sketch out in exquisite detail the Christian map for happiness.

In the Gospel of John we are given a humble, simple, hospitable deed of washing feet. After he is finished, Jesus—knowing that the disciples lacked full understanding—urges them into action: “Blessed are you if you do it” [washing of feet and Jesus’ other teachings] (13:17b).

We have here a highly pragmatic path to happiness. In doing the loving thing and reaching out to others in service, we participate in the inner life of Jesus. By doing what Jesus did, we enter into a blessed way of life.

Conventional wisdom finds this absurd. The cultural messages we get would have us believe that happiness lies in “doing it my way.” We’re often told, “You only go around once, so grab as much as you can get,” and, “The one who dies with the most toys wins.” Biblical wisdom proclaims that blessedness lies in surrendering to God’s will, in service to others, in washing another’s feet.

How do we do this? We wash one another’s feet by stopping to help a



stranded motorist or holding the hand of a dying person. We wash one another’s feet when we attempt to change unjust systems, when we strive to end world hunger, when social justice and the gospel become our priority. The happiness and blessedness that Jesus proposes is not living

well, feeling good, or staying in our comfort zones. This gospel living is risky business.

Missing the Point

It is consoling to see that the disciples often struggled to understand what Jesus was about. Peter saw suffering as inappropriate to Jesus’ life. James and John would have God send down fire upon an inhospitable Samaritan town. Thomas didn’t believe reports that Jesus had risen. We should not be surprised if we, too, find it difficult to equate blessedness with a life of service. Every day we should pray for two things: the knowledge to understand Jesus’ teaching, and the courage to put it into action.

If we are to become disciples, we can’t just give a portion of our time, talent, and treasure to God. The cost of discipleship involves the giving of self. Since we are made in the likeness of a self-giving God, our vocation is to strive in grace to image the God who made us.

One simple, concrete expression of this self-giving love that leads to blessedness is the washing of feet. It is a symbol of a large reality, God’s kingdom: being totally for others, whatever their needs. In serving one another, we serve the Lord and become like Jesus.

Bountiful Byproducts

Those who serve as Jesus did experience an indescribable joy because through that service—be it the washing of feet, the giving of a cup of cold water, a word of affection—we are bonded to Christ and the community. In that bonding lies happiness, and from it flows two byproducts: joy and peace.

Concluding prayer: Lord, sometimes we just don’t get it. Help us to understand that by caring for others we further your kingdom. Do not let us pursue a false blessedness through a life of self-seeking. Rather, draw us into your life and ministry. Therein we will do your will and know your peace. +



Lord, your resurrection conquered sin and death. Give me the strength to overcome pride so I can become a humble servant of your love and peace.

From Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 31–September 5

Monday, Weekday:
1 Cor 2:1–5 / Lk 4:16–30

Tuesday, Weekday:
1 Cor 2:10b–16 / Lk 4:31–37

Wednesday, Weekday:
1 Cor 3:1–9 / Lk 4:38–44

Thursday, St. Gregory the Great:
1 Cor 3:18–23 / Lk 5:1–11

Friday, Weekday:
1 Cor 4:1–5 / Lk 5:33–39

Saturday, Weekday:
1 Cor 4:6b–15 / Lk 6:1–5